

# **The Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance**

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**AS AMENDED THROUGH MAY 2003**

**Miami-Dade County Commission on  
Ethics and Public Trust**

*The following is a summary of Section 2-11.1 of the Code of Miami-Dade County, the County's Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance. For a complete understanding of the provisions of this ordinance, the appropriate section or sections should be read in their entirety. If a legal interpretation is needed, a request should be made pursuant to the provisions of Section (r).*

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**Sec. 2-11.1. Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance.**

(a) *Designation.* This section shall be designated and known as the "Miami-Dade County Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance." This section shall be applicable to all County personnel as defined herein, and shall also constitute a minimum standard of ethical conduct and behavior for all municipal officials and officers, autonomous personnel, quasi-judicial personnel, advisory personnel, departmental personnel and employees of municipalities in the County insofar as their individual relationships with their own municipal governments are concerned. References in the section to County personnel shall therefore be applicable to municipal personnel who serve in comparable capacities to the County personnel referred to.

(b) *Definitions.* For the purposes of this section the following definitions shall be effective:

- (1) The term "*commissioners*" shall refer to the Mayor and the members of the Board of County Commissioners as duly constituted from time to time.
- (2) The term "*autonomous personnel*" shall refer to the members of semi-autonomous authorities, boards and agencies as are entrusted with the day-to-day policy setting, operation and management of certain defined County functions or areas of responsibility, even though the ultimate responsibility for such functions or areas rests with the Board of County Commissioners.
- (3) The term "*quasi-judicial personnel*" shall refer to the members of Community Zoning Appeals Board and such other boards and agencies of the County as perform quasi-judicial functions.
- (4) The term "*advisory personnel*" shall refer to the members of those County advisory boards and agencies whose sole or primary responsibility is to recommend legislation or give advice to the Board of County Commissioners.

- (5) The term "*departmental personnel*" shall refer to the Manager, department heads, the County Attorney and all Assistant County Attorneys.
  - (6) The term "*employees*" shall refer to all other salaried personnel employed by the County.
  - (7) The term "*compensation*" shall refer to any money, gift, favor, thing of value or financial benefit conferred in return for services rendered or to be rendered.
  - (8) The term "*controlling financial interest*" shall refer to ownership, directly or indirectly, to ten (10) per cent or more of the outstanding capital stock in any corporation or a direct or indirect interest of ten (10) per cent or more in a firm, partnership or other business entity.
  - (9) The term "*immediate family*" shall refer to the spouse, parents and children of the person involved.
  - (10) The term "*transact any business*" shall refer to the purchase or sale by the County of specific goods or services for a consideration.
  - (11) The term "*Ethics Commission*" shall refer to the Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust.
- (c) *Prohibition on transacting business within the County.*
- (1) No person included in the terms defined in Subsection (b)(1) through (6) and in Subsection (b)(9) shall enter into any contract or transact any business, except as provided in Subsections (c)(2) through (c)(6), in which he or she or a member of his or her immediate family has a financial interest, direct or indirect, with Miami-Dade County or any person or agency acting for Miami-Dade County, and any such contract, agreement or business engagement entered in violation of this Subsection shall render the transaction voidable. Willful violation of this Subsection shall constitute malfeasance in office and shall effect forfeiture of office or position.
  - (2) County employees' limited exclusion from prohibition on contracting with the County. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary herein, Subsections (c) and (d) shall not be construed to prevent any employee as defined in Subsection (b)(6) [excluding departmental personnel as defined in Subsection (b)(5)] or his or her immediate family as defined in Subsection (b)(9) from entering into any contract, individually or through a firm, corporation, partnership or business entity in which the employee or any member of his or her immediate family has a controlling financial interest, with Miami-Dade County or any person or agency acting for Miami-

Dade County, as long as 1) entering into the contract would not interfere with the full and faithful discharge by the employee of his or her duties to the County, 2) the employee has not participated in determining the subject contract requirements or awarding the contract, and 3) the employee's job responsibilities and job description will not require him or her to be involved in the contract in any way including, but not limited to, its enforcement, oversight, administration, amendment, extension, termination or forbearance. However, this limited exclusion shall not be construed to authorize an employee or his or her immediate family member to enter into a contract with Miami-Dade County or any person or agency acting for Miami-Dade County if the employee works in the County department which will enforce, oversee or administer the subject contract.

- (3) Limited exclusion from prohibition on autonomous personnel, advisory personnel and quasi-judicial personnel contracting with County. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary herein, Subsections (c) and (d) shall not be construed to prohibit any person defined in Subsection (b)(2), (b)(3) and (b)(4) from entering into any contract, individually or through a firm, corporation, partnership or business entity in which the board member or any member of his or her immediate family has a controlling financial interest, with Miami-Dade County or any person or agency acting for Miami-Dade County. However, any person defined in Subsection (b)(2), (b)(3) and (b)(4) is prohibited from contracting with any agency or department of Miami-Dade County subject to the regulation, oversight, management, policy-setting or quasi-judicial authority of the board of which the person is a member.
- (4) Any person defined in Subsections (b)(2) through (b)(4) and Subsection (b)(6) shall seek a conflict of interest opinion from the Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust ("the Ethics Commission") prior to submittal of a bid, response or application of any type to contract with the County by the person or his or her immediate family. A request for a conflict of interest opinion shall be made in writing and shall set forth and include all pertinent facts and relevant documents. If the Ethics Commission finds that the requirements of this section pertaining to exclusions for persons defined in Subsections (b)(2) through (b)(4) and Subsection (b)(6) are not met and that the proposed transaction would create a conflict of interest, the person defined in Subsections (b)(2), (b)(3), (b)(4) or (b)(6) may request a waiver from the Board of County Commissioners within ten (10) days of the

Ethics Commission opinion by filing a notice of appeal to the Ethics Commission. The Ethics Commission shall forward the notice of appeal and its opinion and any pertinent documents to the Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners (the "Clerk") forthwith. The Clerk shall place the request on the commission agenda for consideration by the Board. The Board of County Commissioners may grant a waiver upon an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the entire Board of County Commissioners, after a public hearing, if it finds that the requirements of this ordinance pertaining to the exclusion for a County employee from the Code have been met and that the proposed transaction will be in the best interest of the County. The Board of County Commissioners may, as provided in Subsection (c)(6), grant a waiver to any person defined in Subsection (b)(2) through (b)(4) regarding a proposed transaction. Such findings shall be included in the minutes of the board. This Subsection shall be applicable only to proposed transactions, and the Board may in no case ratify a transaction entered into in violation of this Subsection.

If the affected person or his or her immediate family member chooses to respond to such solicitation to contract with the County, such person shall file with the Clerk a statement in a form satisfactory to the Clerk disclosing the person's interest or the interest of his or her immediate family in the proposed contract and the nature of the intended contract at the same time as or before submitting a bid, response or application of any type to contract with the County. Along with the disclosure form, the affected person shall file with the Clerk a copy of his or her request for an Ethics Commission opinion and any opinion or waiver from the Board. Also, a copy of the request for a conflict of interest opinion from the Ethics Commission and opinion or waiver must be submitted with the response to the solicitation to contract with the County.

Notwithstanding any provision herein to the contrary, the County and any person or agency acting for Miami-Dade County shall not award a contract to any person defined in Subsections (b)(2) through (b)(4) and Subsection (b)(6) or his or her immediate family individually or through a firm, corporation, partnership or business entity in which the person or any member of his or her immediate family has a controlling financial interest, unless the Ethics Commission has rendered an opinion that entering into the contract would not be a conflict of interest or the Board waives the conflict in accordance with the provisions of this ordinance.

The County Manager is directed to include language in all solicitations for County contracts advising persons defined in Subsections (b)(2) through (b)(4) and Subsection (b)(6) of the applicable conflict of interest code provisions, the provisions of this ordinance, including the requirement to obtain an Ethics Commission opinion and make disclosure and the right to seek a legal opinion from the State of Florida Ethics Commission regarding the applicability of state law conflict of interest provisions.

- (5) Nothing herein shall prohibit or make illegal (1) the payment of taxes, special assessments or fees for services provided by County government; (2) the purchase of bonds, anticipation notes or other securities that may be issued by the County through underwriters or directly from time to time; (3) the participation of the persons included in the terms defined in Subsection (b)(1) through (b)(6), except for employees of the general services administration and their "immediate family" as defined in (b)(9), in the public auction process utilized by the County for the disposal of surplus motor vehicles; (4) the purchase of surplus personal property, pursuant to administrative order, by persons defined in Subsection (b)(1) through (6) and (9); (5) an application for direct assistance from the Miami-Dade County Department of Housing and Urban Development or an application to participate in a program administered by the Department of Special Housing, has been submitted by an applicant who is a County person as defined in Subsection (b) and who would but for this section be eligible for such assistance from said department; provided, however, that the exception provided in this paragraph shall not extend to an employee of the Miami-Dade County Department of Housing and Urban Development or the Department of Special Housing who participates in the administration of said programs; or (6) an application to participate in a single-family mortgage loan program sponsored by the Housing Finance Authority of Miami-Dade County, has been submitted by a County person as defined in Subsection (b), and would but for this section be eligible for participation in said program; provided, however, that the exception provided in this paragraph shall not extend to an employee of the Miami-Dade County Finance Department who participates in the administration of said single-family mortgage loan program.
- (6) Extension of waiver to County Commissioners, autonomous personnel, quasi-judicial personnel and advisory personnel. The requirements of this Subsection may be waived for a particular

transaction only by affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the entire Board of County Commissioners, after public hearing. Such waiver may be affected only after findings by two-thirds (2/3) of the entire Board that:

- (1) An open-to-all sealed competitive bid has been submitted by a County person as defined in Subsection (b)(2), (3) and (4), or
- (2) The bid has been submitted by a person or firm offering services within the scope of practice of architecture, professional engineering, or registered land surveying as defined by the laws of the State of Florida and pursuant to the provisions of the Consultants' Competitive Negotiation Act, and when the bid has been submitted by a County person defined in Subsection (b)(2), (3) and (4), or
- (3) The property or services to be involved in the proposed transaction are unique and the County cannot avail itself of such property or services without entering a transaction which would violate this Subsection but for waiver of its requirements, or
- (4) That the property or services to be involved in the proposed transaction are being offered to the County at a cost of no more than 80% of fair market value based on a certified appraisal paid for by the provider, and
- (5) That the proposed transaction will be to the best interest of the County.

Such findings shall be spread on the minutes of the Board. This Subsection shall be applicable only to prospective transactions, and the Board may in no case ratify a transaction entered in violation of this Subsection.

*Provisions cumulative.* This Subsection shall be taken to be cumulative and shall not be construed to amend or repeal any other law pertaining to the same subject matter.

(d) *Further prohibition on transacting business with the County.* No person included in the terms defined in Subsections (b)(1) through (6) and in Subsection (b)(9) shall enter into any contract or transact any business through a firm, corporation, partnership or business entity in which he or any member of his immediate family has a controlling financial interest, direct or indirect, with Miami-Dade County or any person or agency acting for Miami-Dade County, and any such contract, agreement or business engagement entered in violation of this Subsection shall render the transaction voidable. The remaining provisions of Subsection (c) will also be applicable to this Subsection as though incorporated herein by recitation.



Additionally, no person included in the term defined in Subsection (b)(1) shall vote on or participate in any way in any matter presented to the Board of County Commissioners if said person has any of the following relationships with any of the persons or entities which would be or might be directly or indirectly affected by any action of the Board of County Commissioners: (i) officer, director, partner, of counsel, consultant, employee, fiduciary or beneficiary; or (ii) stockholder, bondholder, debtor, or creditor, if in any instance the transaction or matter would affect the person defined in Subsection (b)(1) in a manner distinct from the manner in which it would affect the public generally. Any person included in the term defined in Subsection (b)(1) who has any of the above relationships or who would or might, directly or indirectly, profit or be enhanced by the action of the Board of County Commissioners shall absent himself or herself from the commission meeting during the discussion of the subject item and shall not vote on or participate in any way in said matter.

(e) *Gifts.*

- (1) *Definition.* The term “gift” shall refer to the transfer of anything of economic value, whether in the form of money, service, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, item or promise or in any other form, without adequate and lawful consideration. Food and beverages consumed at a single sitting or meal shall be considered a single gift, and the value of the food and beverage provided at that sitting or meal shall be considered the value of the gift.
- (2) *Exceptions.* The provisions of Subsection (e)(1) shall not apply to:
  - (a) Political contributions specifically authorized by state law;
  - (b) Gifts from relatives or members of one's household;
  - (c) Awards for professional or civic achievement;
  - (d) Material such as books, reports, periodicals or pamphlets which are solely informational or of an advertising nature;
  - (e) Gifts solicited by County employees or departmental personnel on behalf of the County in performance of their official duties for use solely by the County in conducting its official business;
  - (f) Gifts solicited by Commissioners on behalf of the County in performance of their official duties for use solely by the County in conducting its official business.
- (3) *Prohibitions.* A person described in Subsection (b)(1) through (6) shall neither solicit nor demand any gift. It is also unlawful for any person or entity to offer, give, or agree to give to any person included in the term defined in Subsection (b)(1) through (6)

or for any person included in the term defined in Subsection (b)(1) through (6) to accept or agree to accept from another person or entity, any gift for or because of:

- (a) An official public action taken or to be taken, or which could be taken;
  - (b) A legal duty performed or to be performed, or which could be performed; or
  - (c) A legal duty violated or to be violated, or which could be violated by any person included in the term defined in Subsection (b)(1).
- (4) *Disclosure.* Any person included in the term defined in Subsection (b)(1) through (6) shall disclose as provided herein any gift, or series of gifts from any one person or entity, having a value in excess of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00). Said disclosure shall be made by filing a copy of the disclosure form required by Chapter 112, Florida Statutes, for “local officers” with the Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners simultaneously with the filing of the form with the Secretary of State.

(f) *Compulsory disclosure by employees of firms doing business with the County.* Should any person included in the terms defined in Subsections (b)(1) through (6) be employed by a corporation, firm, partnership or business entity in which he does not have a controlling financial interest, either himself or through a member of his immediate family, and should the said corporation, firm, partnership or business entity have substantial business commitments to or from the County or any County agency, or be subject to direct regulation by the County or a County agency, then said person shall file a sworn statement disclosing such employment and interest with the Clerk of the Circuit Court in and for Miami-Dade County.

(g) *Exploitation of official position prohibited.* No person included in the terms defined in Subsections (b)(1) through (6) shall use or attempt to use his official position to secure special privileges or exemptions for himself or others except as may be specifically permitted by other ordinances and resolutions previously ordained or adopted or hereafter to be ordained or adopted by the Board of County Commissioners.

(h) *Prohibition on use of confidential information.* No person included in the terms defined in Subsections (b)(1) through (6) shall accept employment or engage in any business or professional activity which he might reasonably expect would require or induce him to disclose confidential information acquired by him by reason of his official position, nor shall he in fact ever disclose confidential information garnered or gained through his official position with the County, nor shall he ever use such information, directly or indirectly, for his personal gain or benefit.

(i) *Financial disclosure.*

(1) All persons and firms included within Subsections (a) and (b)(2), (3) and (4) of this section shall file, no later than 12:00 noon of July 1st of each year, including the July 1st following the last year that person is in office or held such employment, one (1) of the following:

- (a) A copy of that person's or firm's current federal income tax return; or
- (b) A current certified financial statement on a form of the type approved for use by state or national banks in Florida listing all assets and liabilities having a value in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) and a short description of each; or
- (c) An itemized source of income statement, under oath and on a form approved by the County for said purpose.

Compliance with the financial disclosure provisions of Chapter 112 (Part III) Florida Statutes, as amended, or with the provisions of Article II, Section 8 of the Florida Constitution, as amended by the voters on November 2, 1976, and any general laws promulgated thereunder shall constitute compliance with this section.

(2) County and municipal personnel. The following County personnel shall comply with the filing requirements of Subsection (i)(1) above: the mayor and members of the Board of County Commissioners; County Attorney and Assistant County Attorneys; County Manager; Assistant County Manager(s); Special Assistant(s) to the County Manager; heads or directors of County departments and their assistant or deputy department heads; employees of the Miami-Dade police with the rank of captain, major and chief; building and zoning inspectors. References herein to specified County personnel and boards shall be applicable to municipal personnel and boards that serve in comparable capacities to the County personnel and boards referred to.

(3) Candidates for County and municipal office. All candidates for County and municipal elective office shall comply with the filing requirements of Subsection (i)(1) above at the same time that candidate files qualifying papers.

(4) Consultants. All persons or firms providing professional services as defined by Section 2-10.4 (1)(a) and (b) of the Code of Miami- Dade County, to Miami-Dade County or any municipalities, their agencies or instrumentalities, shall comply with the filing requirements of Subsection (i)(1) above

within ninety (90) days of the effective date hereof. All persons or firms subsequent to the effective date of this section, which engage in competitive negotiation with Miami-Dade County or any of its municipalities, their agencies or instrumentalities under and pursuant to Section 2-10.4 of the Code of Miami-Dade County shall comply with the reporting requirements of Subsection (i)(1) of this section within thirty (30) days of execution of a contract arising out of said competitive negotiations and prior to any payments from said County, municipalities or other agencies or instrumentalities. Failure to comply with the terms hereof by such persons or firms shall render existing contracts voidable and shall automatically void any contracts negotiated and executed subsequent to the effective date of this section where the required information is not furnished within thirty (30) days of the execution of said contract as noted herein.

- (5) Reports; filing. All documents required to be filed hereunder by County persons or consultants shall be filed with the supervisor of elections. Documents required to be filed hereunder by municipal persons or consultants shall be filed with the municipal clerk of that entity.
- (6) Public disclosure. All documents filed pursuant to this Subsection shall constitute public records within the meaning of Chapter 119, Florida Statutes.
- (7) Construction. The construction of this Subsection shall be considered as supplemental to and not in substitution of any requirements of Chapter 112, Florida Statutes, or any rules and regulations promulgated thereunder.

(j) *Conflicting employment prohibited.* No person included in the terms defined in Subsections (b)(1) through (6) shall accept other employment which would impair his or her independence of judgment in the performance of his or her public duties.

(k) *Prohibition on outside employment.*

- (1) No person included in the terms defined in Subsections (b)(5) [departmental personnel] and (6) [employees] shall receive any compensation for his or her services as an officer or employee of the County, from any source other than the County except as may be permitted by Section 2-11 of this Code of Ordinances.
- (2) All full-time County and municipal employees engaged in any outside employment for any person, firm, corporation or entity other than Miami-Dade County, or the respective municipality, or any of their agencies or instrumentalities, shall file, under oath, an annual report indicating the

source of the outside employment, the nature of the work being done pursuant to same and any amount or types of money or other consideration received by the employee from said outside employment. Said County employee's reports shall be filed with the supervisor of elections no later than 12:00 noon on July 1st of each year, including the July 1st following the last year that person held such employment. Municipal employee reports shall be filed with the clerk of their respective municipalities. Said reports shall be available at a reasonable time and place for inspection by the public. The County Manager or any city manager may require monthly reports from individual employees or groups of employees for good cause.

(l) *Prohibited investments.* No person included in the terms defined in Subsections (b)(1) through (6) shall have personal investments in any enterprise, either himself or through a member of his immediate family, which will create a substantial conflict between his private interests and the public interest.

(m) *Certain appearances and payment prohibited.*

- (1) No person included in the terms defined in Subsections (b)(1), (5) and (6) [commissioners, departmental personnel and employees] shall appear before any County board or agency and make a presentation on behalf of a third person with respect to any license, contract, certificate, ruling, decision, opinion, rate schedule, franchise, or other benefit sought by the third person. Nor shall such person receive compensation, directly or indirectly or in any form, for services rendered to a third person, who has applied for or is seeking some benefit from the County or a County agency, in connection with the particular benefit sought by the third person. Nor shall such person appear in any court or before any administrative tribunal as counsel or legal advisor to a party who seeks legal relief from the County or a County agency through the suit in question.
- (2) No person included in the terms defined in Subsections (b)(2), (3) and (4) [autonomous personnel, quasi-judicial personnel and advisory personnel] shall appear before the County board or agency on which he or she serves, either directly or through an associate, and make a presentation on behalf of a third person with respect to any license, contract, certificate, ruling, decision, opinion, rate schedule, franchise, or other benefit sought by the third person. Nor shall such person receive compensation, directly or indirectly or in any form, for services rendered to a third party, who has applied for or is seeking some benefit from the County board or agency on which such person

serves, in connection with the particular benefit by the third party. Nor shall such person appear in any court or before any administrative tribunal as counsel or legal advisor to a third party who seeks legal relief from the County board or agency on which such person serves through the suit in question. However, this section shall not prohibit an architect serving without compensation on the Miami-Dade County Board of Energy Regulation or on any architectural board, whose sole function is to pass on the aesthetics of plans submitted, from submitting plans on behalf of a client so long as such member makes known his representation of the applicant and disqualifies himself from speaking or voting or otherwise participating on such application.

(n) *Actions prohibited when financial interests involved.* No person included in the terms defined in Subsections (b)(1) through (6) shall participate in any official action directly or indirectly affecting a business in which he or any member of his immediate family has a financial interest. A financial interest is defined as a special financial interest, direct or indirect, as that term is used in Section 4.03 of the County's Charter; or as a financial interest as defined in Section 769 of the Restatement of the Law of Torts as an investment or something in the nature of an investment. This section shall not prohibit any official, officer, employee or person from taking official action (1) to promote tourism or downtown development or redevelopment within the County or any portion thereof, or (2) to authorize the expenditure of public funds for promoting tourism or downtown development or redevelopment, so long as no such authorized public funds are to be paid to such person or a member of his immediate family or any business in which he or any member of his immediate family has a financial interest.

(o) *Acquiring financial interest.* No person included in the terms defined in Subsections (b)(1) through (6) shall acquire a financial interest in a project, business entity or property at a time when he believes or has reason to believe that the said financial interest will be directly affected by his official actions or by official actions by the County or County agency of which he is an official, officer or employee.

(p) *Recommending professional services.* No person included in the terms defined in Subsections (b)(1) through (6) may recommend the services of any lawyer or law firm, architect or architectural firm, public relations firm or any other person or firm, professional or otherwise, to assist in any transaction involving the County or any of its agencies, provided that such recommendation may properly be made when required to be made by the duties of office and in advance at a public meeting attended by other County officials, officers or employees.

*(q) Continuing application for two (2) years after County service.*

- (1) No person who has served as an elected County official, i.e., mayor, County Commissioner or a member of the staff of an elected County official, or as County Manager, senior assistant to the County Manager, department director, departmental personnel or employee shall, for a period of two (2) years after his or her County service or employment has ceased, lobby any County officer, departmental personnel or employee in connection with any judicial or other proceeding, application, RFP, RFQ, bid, request for ruling or other determination, contract, claim, controversy, charge, accusation, arrest or other particular subject matter in which Miami-Dade County or one (1) of its agencies or instrumentalities is a party or has any interest whatever, whether direct or indirect. Additionally, no person who has served as a community council member shall, for a period of two (2) years after his or her County service or employment has ceased, lobby, with regard to any zoning or land use issue, any County officer, departmental personnel or employee in connection with any judicial or other proceeding, application, request for ruling or other determination, contract, claim, controversy, charge, accusation, arrest or other particular subject matter in which Miami-Dade County or one (1) of its agencies or instrumentalities is a party or has any interest whatever, whether direct or indirect. Nothing contained in this Subsection (q)(1) shall prohibit any individual included within the provisions of this Subsection from submitting a routine administrative request or application to a County department or agency during the two (2) year period after his or her County service has ceased.
- (2) The provisions of this Subsection (q) shall not apply to officials, departmental personnel or employees who become employed by governmental entities, 501(c)(3) non-profit entities or educational institutions or entities and who lobby on behalf of such entities in their official capacities.
- (3) The provisions of this section shall apply to all individuals as described in Subsection (q)(1) who leave the County after the effective date of the ordinance from which this section derives.
- (4) Any former County officer, departmental personnel or employee who has left the County within two (2) years prior to the effective date of this ordinance and has entered into a lobbying contract prior to the effective date of this ordinance shall, for a period of two (2) years after his or her County service has ceased, comply with Subsection (q) as it



existed prior to the effective date of the ordinance from which this section derives as modified by this Subsection (q)(4) when lobbying pursuant to said contract. No former County officer, departmental personnel or employee who has left the County within two (2) years prior to the effective date of the ordinance from which this section derives shall for a period of two years after his or her County service or employment has ceased enter into a lobbying contract to lobby any County officer, departmental personnel or employee in connection with any judicial or other proceeding, application, RFP, RFQ, bid, request for ruling or other determination, contract, claim, controversy, charge, accusation, arrest or other particular subject matter in which Miami-Dade County or one (1) of its agencies, instrumentalities is a party or has a direct and substantial interest; and in which he or she participated directly or indirectly as a officer, departmental personnel or employee through decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, the rendering of advice, investigation or otherwise during his or her County service or employment. As used herein, a person participated "directly" where he or she was substantially involved in the particular subject matter through decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, the rendering of advice, investigation or otherwise during his or her County service or employment. As used herein, a person participated "indirectly" where he or she knowingly participated in any way in the particular subject matter through decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, the rendering of legal advice, investigation or otherwise during his or her County service or employment. Former County officers, departmental personnel and employees who have left the County within two (2) years prior to the effective date of the ordinance from which this section derives shall execute an affidavit on a form prepared by the Office of Inspector General prior to lobbying any County officer, departmental personnel or employee stating that the requirements of this section do not preclude said person from lobbying any officer, departmental personnel or employee of the County. The Inspector General shall verify the accuracy of each affidavit executed by former County officers, departmental personnel or employees.

- (5) Any individual who is found to be in violation of this Subsection (q) shall be subject to the penalties provided in either Subsection (z)(1) or Subsection (z)(2).



(r) *Ethics Commission to render opinions on request.*

Whenever any person included in the terms defined in Subsection (b)(1) through (6) and Subsection (b)(9) is in doubt as to the proper interpretation or application of this Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance as to himself or herself, or whenever any person who renders services to the County is in doubt as to the applicability of the said ordinance as to himself or herself, he or she may submit to the Ethics Commission a full written statement of the facts and questions he or she has. The Ethics Commission shall then render an opinion to such person and shall publish these opinions without use of the name of the person advised unless such person requests the use of his or her name.

(s) *Lobbying.*

(1) (a) As used in this section, "County personnel" means those County officers and employees specified in Section 2-11.1(i)(2) of the Miami-Dade County Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance.

(b) As used in this section, "Lobbyist" means all persons, firms, or corporations employed or retained by a principal who seeks to encourage the passage, defeat, or modifications of (1) ordinance, resolution, action or decision of the County Commission; (2) any action, decision, recommendation of the County Manager or any County board or committee; or (3) any action, decision or recommendation of County personnel during the time period of the entire decision-making process on such action, decision or recommendation which foreseeably will be heard or reviewed by the County Commission, or a County board or committee. "Lobbyist" specifically includes the principal, as well as any employee whose normal scope of employment includes lobbying activities.

The term "Lobbyist" specifically excludes the following persons: attorneys or other representatives retained or employed solely for the purpose of representing individuals, corporations or other entities during publicly noticed quasi-judicial proceedings where the law prohibits ex-parte communications; expert witnesses who provide only scientific, technical or other specialized information or testimony in public meetings; any person who only appears as a representative of a neighborhood association without compensation or reimbursement for the appearance, whether direct, indirect or contingent, to express support of or opposition to any item; any person who only appears as a

representative of a not-for-profit community-based organization for the purpose of requesting a grant without special compensation or reimbursement for the appearance; and employees of a principal whose normal scope of employment does not include lobbying activities.

(2) All lobbyists shall register with the Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners within three (3) business days of being retained as a lobbyist or before engaging in any lobbying activities, whichever shall come first. Every person required to so register shall:

- (a) Register on forms prepared by the Clerk;
- (b) State under oath his or her name, business address and the name and business address of each person or entity which has employed said registrant to lobby. If the lobbyist represents a corporation, the corporation shall also be identified. Without limiting the foregoing, the lobbyist shall also identify all persons holding, directly or indirectly, a five (5) percent or more ownership interest in such corporation, partnership or trust. Registration of all lobbyists shall be required prior to January 15 of each year, and each person who withdraws as a lobbyist for a particular client shall file an appropriate notice of withdrawal. The fee for annual registration shall be four hundred and ninety dollars (\$490.00). Every registrant shall be required to state the extent of any business or professional relationship with any current person described in Subsection (b)(1). The registration fees required by this Subsection shall be deposited by the clerk into a separate account and shall be expended for the purpose of recording, transcribing, administration and other costs incurred in maintaining these records for availability to the public. There shall be no fee required for filing a notice of withdrawal and the Board of County Commissioners may, in its discretion, waive the registration fee upon a finding of financial hardship.
- (c) Prior to conducting any lobbying, all principals must file a form with the Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners, signed by the principal or the principal's representative, stating that the lobbyist is authorized to represent the principal. Failure of a principal to file the form required by the preceding sentence may be considered in the evaluation of a bid or proposal as evidence that a proposer

or bidder is not a responsible contractor. Each principal shall file with the Clerk of the Board at the point in time at which a lobbyist is no longer authorized to represent the principal.

- (3) (a) Any public officer, employee or appointee who only appears in his or her official capacity shall not be required to register as a lobbyist.
- (b) Any person who only appears in his or her individual capacity for the purpose of self-representation without compensation or reimbursement, whether direct, indirect or contingent, to express support of or opposition to any item, shall not be required to register as a lobbyist.
- (4) Any person who only appears as a representative of a not-for-profit corporation or entity (such as a charitable organization, a trade association or trade union), without special compensation or reimbursement for the appearance, whether direct, indirect or contingent, to express support or opposition to any item, shall register with the Clerk as required by this Subsection, but, upon request, shall not be required to pay any registration fees.
- (5) Any person who appears as a representative for an individual or firm for an oral presentation before a County certification, evaluation, selection, technical review or similar committee, shall list on an affidavit provided by the County, all individuals who may make a presentation. The affidavit shall be filed by staff with the Clerk's office at the time the proposal is submitted. For the purpose of this Subsection only, the listed members of the presentation team shall not be required to pay any registration fees. No person shall appear before any committee on behalf of an individual or firm unless he or she has been listed as part of the firm's presentation team pursuant to this paragraph or unless he or she is registered with the Clerk's office and has paid all applicable fees.
- (6) (a) Commencing July 1, 1986, and on July 1 of each year thereafter, the lobbyist shall submit to the Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners a signed statement under oath, as provided herein, listing all lobbying expenditures in excess of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for the preceding calendar year. A statement shall be filed even if there have been no expenditures during the reporting period. The statement shall list in detail each expenditure by category, including food and beverage, entertainment, research, communications, media advertising, publications, travel, lodging and special events.
- (b) The Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners shall notify any lobbyist who fails

to timely file an expenditure report. In addition to any other penalties which may be imposed as provided in Subsection (s)(9), a fine of fifty dollars (\$50.00) per day shall be assessed for reports filed after the due date. Where a fine of fifty dollars (\$50.00) per day is assessed, the Ethics Commission shall not impose a fine as provided in Subsection (z). Any lobbyist who fails to file the required expenditure report by September 1st shall be automatically suspended from lobbying until all fines are paid unless the fine has been appealed to the Ethics Commission.

- (c) The Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners shall notify the Commission on Ethics and Public Trust of the failure of a lobbyist or principal to file a report and/or pay the assessed fines after notification.
  - (d) A lobbyist or principal may appeal a fine and may request a hearing before the Commission on Ethics and Public Trust. A request for a hearing on the fine must be filed with the Commission on Ethics and Public Trust within fifteen (15) calendar days of receipt of notification of the failure to file the required disclosure form. The Commission on Ethics and Public Trust shall have the authority to waive the fine, in whole or in part, based on good cause shown. The Commission on Ethics and Public Trust shall have the authority to adopt rules of procedure regarding appeals from the Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners.
- (7) No person may, in whole or in part, pay, give or agree to pay or give a contingency fee to another person. No person may, in whole or in part, receive or agree to receive a contingency fee. As used herein, "contingency fee" means a fee, bonus, commission, or nonmonetary benefit as compensation which is dependent on or in any way contingent on the passage, defeat, or modification of: (1) an ordinance, resolution, action or decision of the County Commission; (2) any action, decision or recommendation of the County Manager or any County board or committee; or (3) any action, decision or recommendation of County personnel during the time period of the entire decision-making process regarding such action, decision or recommendation which foreseeably will be heard or reviewed by the County Commission, or a County board or committee.
- (8) The Clerk shall publish logs on a quarterly and an annual basis reflecting the lobbyist registrations which have been filed in accordance with this

Subsection (s). All logs required by this ordinance shall be prepared in a manner substantially similar to the logs prepared for the Florida Legislature pursuant to Section 11.045, Florida Statutes.

- (9) The Ethics Commission shall investigate any person engaged in lobbying activities who may be in violation of this Subsection (s). In the event that a violation is found to have been committed, the Ethics Commission may, in addition to the penalties set forth in Subsection (z), prohibit such person from lobbying before the County Commission or any committee, board or personnel of the County as provided herein. Every lobbyist who is found to be in violation of this section shall be prohibited from registering as a lobbyist or lobbying in accordance with the following schedule:

1st violation for a period of ninety (90) days from the date of determination of violation;

2nd violation for a period of one (1) year from the date of determination of violation;

3rd violation for a period of five (5) years from the date of determination of violation;

A bidder or proposer shall be subject to the debarment provisions of Section 10-38 of the Code of Miami-Dade County as if the bidder or proposer were a contractor where the bidder or proposer has violated this section, either directly or indirectly or any combination thereof, on three (3) or more occasions. As used herein, a "direct violation" shall mean a violation committed by the bidder or proposer and an "indirect violation" shall mean a violation committed by a lobbyist representing said bidder or proposer. A contract entered into in violation of this section shall also render the contract voidable. The County Manager shall include the provisions to this Subsection in all County bid documents, RFP, RFQ, CBO and CDBG applications; provided, however, the failure to do so shall not render any contract entered into as the result of such failure illegal per se.

- (10) All members of the County Commission, and all County personnel, shall be diligent to ascertain whether persons required to register pursuant to this Subsection have complied. Commissioners or County personnel may not knowingly permit a person who is not registered pursuant to this Subsection to lobby the commissioner or the relevant committee, board or County personnel.
- (11) Except as otherwise provided in Subsection (s)(9), the validity of any action or determination of the Board of County Commissioners or County personnel, board or committee shall not be affected

by the failure of any person to comply with the provisions of this Subsection (s).

(t) *Cone of Silence.*

1. Contracts for the provision of goods and service other than audit and independent private sector inspector general (IPSIG) contracts.

(a) "Cone of Silence" is hereby defined to mean a prohibition on: (i) any communication regarding a particular RFP, RFQ or bid between a potential vendor, service provider, bidder, lobbyist or consultant and the County's professional staff including, but not limited to, the County Manager and his or her staff; (ii) any communication regarding a particular RFP, RFQ or bid between the Mayor, County Commissioners or their respective staffs and any member of the County's professional staff including, but not limited to, the County Manager and his or her staff; (iii) any communication regarding a particular RFP, RFQ or bid between a potential vendor, service provider, bidder, lobbyist or consultant and any member of the selection committee therefor; (iv) any communication regarding a particular RFP, RFQ or bid between the Mayor, County Commissioners or their respective staffs and any member of the selection committee therefor; (v) any communication regarding a particular RFP, RFQ or bid between a potential vendor, service provider, bidder, lobbyist, or consultant and the Mayor, County Commissioners and their respective staffs; and (vi) any communication regarding a particular RFP, RFQ or bid between any member of the County's professional staff and any member of the selection committee therefor. The County Manager and the Chairperson of the selection committee may communicate about a particular selection committee recommendation, but only after the committee has submitted an award recommendation to the Manager and provided that should any change occur in the committee recommendation, the content of the communication and of the corresponding change shall be described in writing and filed by the Manager with the Clerk of the Board and be included in any recommendation memorandum submitted by the Manager to the Board of County Commissioners. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Cone of Silence shall not apply to (i) competitive processes for the award of CDBG, HOME, SHIP and Surtax funds administered by the Miami-Dade County Office of Community and Economic Development and the community-based organization (CBO)

competitive grant processes administered by the Park and Recreation, Library, Water and Sewer, and Solid Waste Departments, Cultural Affairs and Tourist Development Councils and the Department of Environmental Resources Management; (ii) communications with the County Attorney and his or her staff; (iii) communications between a potential vendor, service provider, bidder, consultant or lobbyist and employees of the Management and Technical Assistance Unit of the Department of Business Development regarding small business and/or minority business programs the Community Business Enterprise and Equitable Distribution Programs; (iv) communications between a potential vendor, service provider, bidder, consultant or lobbyist and employees responsible for administering disadvantaged business enterprise programs in County departments receiving federal funds, provided the communications are limited strictly to matters of programmatic process or procedure; (v) duly noticed site visits to determine the competency of bidders regarding a particular bid during the time period between the opening of bids and the time that the County Manager makes his or her written recommendation; (vi) any emergency procurement of goods or services pursuant to Administrative Order 3-2; (vii) communications regarding a particular RFP, RFQ or bid between any person and the Vendor Information Center staff, the procurement agent or contracting officer responsible for administering the procurement process for such RFP, RFQ or bid, provided the communication is limited strictly to matters of process or procedure already contained in the corresponding solicitation document; and (viii) communications regarding a particular RFP, RFQ or bid between the procurement agent or contracting officer, or their designated secretarial/clerical staff responsible for administering the procurement process for such RFP, RFQ or bid and a member of the selection committee therefor, provided the communication is limited strictly to matters of process or procedure already contained in the corresponding solicitation document.

(b) *Procedure.*

- (i) A Cone of Silence shall be imposed upon each RFP, RFQ and bid after the advertisement of said RFP, RFQ or bid. At the time of imposition of the Cone of Silence, the County Manager and his or her designee shall provide for public

notice of the Cone of Silence. The County Manager shall include in any public solicitation for goods and services a statement disclosing the requirements of this ordinance. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the imposition of a Cone of Silence on a particular RFP, RFQ or bid shall not preclude staff from obtaining industry comment or performing market research therefor, provided all communications related thereto between a potential vendor, service provider, bidder, lobbyist or consultant and any member of the County's professional staff including, but not limited to, the County Manager and his or her staff are in writing or are made at a duly noticed public meeting.

- (ii) The Cone of Silence shall terminate at the time the Manager makes his or her written recommendation to the County Commission; provided, however, that if the Commission refers the Manager's recommendation back to the Manager or staff for further review, the Cone of Silence shall be reimposed until such time as the Manager makes a subsequent written recommendation.
  - (c) *Exceptions.* The provisions of this ordinance shall not apply to oral communications at pre-bid conferences, oral presentations before selection committees, contract negotiations during any duly noticed public meetings, public presentations made to the Board of County Commissioners during any duly noticed public meeting or communications in writing at any time with any County employee, official or member of the Board of County Commissioners unless specifically prohibited by the applicable RFP, RFQ or bid documents. The bidder or proposer shall file a copy of any written communication with the Clerk of the Board. The Clerk of the Board shall make copies available to any person upon request.
2. *Audit and IPSIG contracts.*
- (a) "Cone of Silence" is hereby defined to mean a prohibition on: (a) any communication regarding a particular RFP, RFQ or bid between a potential vendor, service provider, bidder, lobbyist or consultant and the Mayor, County Commissioners or their respective staffs and any member of the County's professional staff including, but not limited to, the County Manager and his or her staff; and (b) any oral communication regarding a particular RFP,



RFQ or bid between the Mayor, County Commissioners or their respective staffs and any member of the County's professional staff including, but not limited to, the County Manager and his or her staff. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Cone of Silence shall not apply to communications with the County Attorney and his or her staff.

- (b) Except as provided in Subsections 2(c) and 2(d) hereof, a Cone of Silence shall be imposed upon each RFP, RFQ and bid for audit and IPSIG services after the advertisement of said RFP, RFQ or bid. At the time of the imposition of the Cone of Silence, the County Manager or his or her designee shall provide for the public notice of the Cone of Silence. The Cone of Silence shall terminate when the County Manager executes a particular audit or IPSIG contract.
  - (c) Nothing contained herein shall prohibit any bidder or proposer: (i) from making public presentations at duly noticed pre-bid conferences or before duly noticed selection committee meetings; (ii) from engaging in contract negotiations during any duly noticed public meeting; or (iii) from communicating in writing with any County employee or official for purposes of seeking clarification or additional information from the County or responding to the County's request for clarification or additional information, subject to the provisions of the applicable RFP, RFQ or bid documents. The bidder or proposer shall file a copy of any written communication with the Clerk of the Board. The Clerk of the Board shall make copies available to the general public upon request.
  - (d) Nothing contained herein shall prohibit any lobbyist, bidder, proposer or other person or entity from publicly addressing the Board of County Commissioners during any duly noticed public meeting regarding action on any audit or IPSIG contract. The County Manager shall include in any public solicitation for auditing or IPSIG services a statement disclosing the requirements of this ordinance.
3. *Penalties.* In addition to the penalties provided in Subsections (s) and (z) hereof, violation of this Subsection (t) by a particular bidder or proposer shall render any RFP award, RFQ award or bid award to said bidder or proposer voidable. Any person who violates a provision of this ordinance shall be prohibited from serving on a Miami-Dade competitive selection committee. In addition to any

other penalty provided by law, violation of any provision of this ordinance by a Miami-Dade County employee shall subject said employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Additionally, any person who has personal knowledge of a violation of this ordinance shall report such violation to the State Attorney and/or may file a complaint with the Ethics Commission.

4. The requirements of Section 2-11.1(t) shall not apply to any municipality in Miami-Dade County that has adopted an ordinance providing that the Code of Silence shall not apply to that municipality. Any municipality that opts out of the requirements of Section 2-11.1(t) shall provide the Ethics Commission with a copy of the ordinance.

(u) *Prohibition on certain business transactions.* No person who is serving as an elected County official or a member of the staff of an elected County official, or as County Manager, senior assistant to the County Manager or department director shall enter into a business transaction with any person or entity that has a contract with Miami-Dade County or any shareholder, partner, officer, director or employee of said contractor, unless said business transaction is an arms-length transaction made in the ordinary course of business. The provisions of this Subsection (u) shall not apply to a business transaction between an elected County official, the County Manager, a senior assistant to the County Manager or a department director and a not-for-profit entity. As used herein, a "shareholder" shall mean any person holding ten (10) percent or more of the outstanding capital stock of any corporation. As used herein, "elected County official" shall mean the Mayor, County Commissioners and community council members. As used herein, "business transaction" shall mean any contract wherein persons either sell, buy, deal, exchange, rent, lend or barter real, personal or intangible property, money or any other thing of value or render services for value.

(v) *Voting Conflicts: Members of Advisory and Quasi-Judicial Boards.* No person included in the terms defined in Subsections (b)(3) (quasi-judicial personnel) and (b)(4) (advisory personnel) shall vote on any matter presented to an advisory board or quasi-judicial board on which the person sits if the board member will be directly affected by the action of the board on which the member serves, and the board member has any of the following relationships with any of the persons or entities appearing before the board: (i) officer, director, partner, of counsel, consultant, employee, fiduciary or beneficiary; or (ii) stockholder, bondholder, debtor or creditor.

(w) *Powers and jurisdiction of Ethics Commission.* The Ethics Commission shall be empowered to review, interpret, render advisory opinions and letters of instruction and enforce the Conflict of Interest and Code of

Ethics Ordinance. Jurisdiction of the Ethics Commission shall automatically extend to commissioners, autonomous personnel, quasi-judicial personnel, departmental personnel, employees, advisory personnel, immediate family, lobbyists as defined in Subsections (b) and (s) who are required to comply with the Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance; and any other person required to comply with the Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance including, but not limited to, contractors and vendors. In the event that the Ethics Commission does not assume jurisdiction as provided in the preceding sentence, the Ethics Commission may refer the complaint to the State Attorney for appropriate action. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Ethics Commission shall not have jurisdiction to consider an alleged violation of Subsection (c) if the requirements of Subsection (c) have been waived for a particular transaction as provided therein.

(x) *Prohibition on participation in settlement negotiations.* Neither the Mayor, a County Commissioner nor any member of their staff shall participate in settlement negotiations of claims or lawsuits, including, but not limited to, contract scope or compensation adjustments involving the County without prior approval of the Board of County Commissioners.

(y) *County Attorney's office participation in contract adjustments.* County staff shall request the participation of the County Attorney's Office to provide legal advice regarding the scope or compensation adjustments which increase by more than one million dollars (\$1,000,000), the value of a construction contract or a contract involving the purchase of goods or services.

(z) *Penalty.*

- (1) *Proceeding before Ethics Commission.* A finding by the Ethics Commission that a person has violated this section shall subject said person to an admonition or public reprimand and/or a fine of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) for the first such violation and five hundred dollars (\$500.00) for each subsequent violation.
- (2) *Prosecution by State Attorney in State court.* Every person who is convicted of a violation of this section in State court shall be punished by a fine not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or imprisonment in the County Jail for not more than thirty (30) days, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

Alex Penelas  
Mayor



## **BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

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Chairperson

Katy Sorenson  
Vice Chairperson

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District 1

Katy Sorenson  
District 8

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District 2

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District 11

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District 5

Jose “Pepe” Diaz  
District 12

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Natacha Seijas  
District 13

Jimmy L. Morales  
District 7

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County Manager

Robert A. Ginsburg  
County Attorney

Harvey Ruvin  
Clerk of Courts

Miami-Dade County provides equal access and equal opportunity in employment and services and does not discriminate on the basis of disability. “It is the policy of Miami-Dade County to comply with all of the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.”

## **ETHICS COMMISSIONERS**

Kerry E. Rosenthal  
Chairman

Dr. Dawn E. Addy

Gail A. Dotson

Elizabeth M. Iglesias

Judge Robert H. Newman



Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust

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